



Jeannette B. DeJesús
SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNOR
OFFICE OF HEALTH REFORM & INNOVATION
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Basic Health Plan Work Group

Meeting
July 9, 2012
2:00pm-3:30pm
Legislative Office Building, Room 1B

Minutes

Members Present: Jeannette DeJesús, Pat Baker, Uma Ganesan (for Roderick Bremby), Kevin Counihan, Anne Foley, David Henderson, Jennifer Jackson, Sharon Langer, Jane McNichol, Deb Polun, Rep. Betsy Ritter, Matt Salner, Rep. Peter Tercyak, Vicki Veltri, Susan Walkama, Katharine London, Mark Schaefer, Bobbi Schmidt

Members Absent: Margaret Flinter, Sen. Terry Gerratana, Sen. Anthony Musto

Welcome and Introductions

Jeannette DeJesús opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and introduced the new members of the work group.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes of the May 22 Meeting

The minutes of the May 22 meeting were approved.

Update from Health Insurance Exchange

Kevin Counihan provided an update from the Health Insurance Exchange. The Exchange recently submitted its Level 2 planning grant and hopes to get federal approval soon. Jim Wadleigh has joined the Exchange staff as Chief Information Officer. Since starting his job as CEO on July 3, Mr. Counihan has met, and will continue to meet, with a number of stakeholders to discuss issues regarding the Exchange. The Exchange is working on its marketing and communications plan, which will include a campaign for outreach to consumers.

Presentation and Discussion: Essential Health Benefits

Ms. DeJesús introduced Anne Melissa Dowling, Deputy Commissioner of the Insurance Department, for a presentation on the Essential Health Benefits package. Ms. Dowling serves as co-chair of the Exchange's Health Plan Benefits and Qualifications Advisory Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Exchange Board on an Essential Health Benefits package. Ms. Dowling said that the Health Plan Benefits and Qualifications Advisory Committee is comprised of a variety of stakeholders. The advisory committee has been meeting frequently and will be presenting its recommendations to the Exchange Board at its July meeting.

Ms. Dowling explained that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires each state to adopt an Essential Health Benefits package which will set a standard for health plans sold to individuals and small groups, including those in the Exchange. The ACA allows states to choose a plan from among those currently offered to serve as the Essential Health Benefits package. These plans must include essential benefits enumerated by the ACA, as well as any mandates required by the state.

The advisory committee has eliminated several plans from consideration, including the federal employees plan, because they do not include all benefits mandated by the state. There are still a few plans being considered, and the cost of the plans will be a major factor in the advisory committee's deliberations.

Discussion of BHP Work Group Governing Principles

Ms. DeJesús briefly reviewed the work group's governing principles, which had been slightly revised since the last meeting. She asked the group if there was consensus on these principles, which will guide the work of the group going forward. Pat Baker said that the principles were consistent with the discussions up to this point, and that she was comfortable with them. There was general agreement among the group about the governing principles.

Discussion of Questions and Work Plan

Ms. DeJesús began the discussion of the questions which will guide the work of the group. These questions had been revised by work group members and technical advisors. Ms. DeJesús asked Katharine London to read through the questions, and then opened up the discussion of the questions.

Representative Betsy Ritter asked about the timetable for the federal government to issue regulations for the BHP. Ms. DeJesús responded that the timing for these regulations is unknown. Ms. London said that she and her colleagues would contact the federal agency responsible for these regulations and inquire about the timetable.

Deb Polun asked if the Department of Social Services is planning to include determination of BHP eligibility in its new eligibility systems. Mark Schaefer responded that DSS is not currently planning for BHP eligibility, since no final decision has been reached on whether to establish a BHP. However, he said that if a BHP is established, DSS would incorporate it into its eligibility systems.

Ms. London mentioned that the work group could consider including benefits in the BHP which are not part of the Essential Health Benefits package adopted by the state. Funding for such benefits would not be included in the federal funds allocated to coverage for individuals in the BHP. Ms. DeJesús asked whether other states were considering a more expansive benefits package for the BHP. Ms. London replied that some states are analyzing this option, but that this decision would vary from state to state.

Jane McNichol asked about the process and timeline for answering the questions. Ms. DeJesús replied that each of the questions notes which group or entity would be best suited to answer that question. She said that the consultants from UMass, as well as an actuarial consultant, would assist with the research and analysis. Ms. DeJesús emphasized the importance of involving people with experience in Connecticut's structures and systems.

Ms. DeJesús asked the group if there was consensus on the questions as a guide to the group's work. David Henderson suggested that the experience of patients should be considered when seeking answers to the questions. Representative Ritter said that some of the questions might not be able to be answered during the timeline that had been discussed. Ms. DeJesús responded that the questions were a guide, and the group may not be able to answer all of them with the time and resources available. Members indicated a general consensus on the questions, and Ms. DeJesús added that they may be refined further, but that these would serve as a guide. Dr. Schaefer mentioned that answers to some of the questions may lead to additional questions which may need to be addressed.

Next Steps

Ms. DeJesús recommended that a subgroup be formed to work on determining answers to the questions and guide the consultants in assisting this effort. Ms. Veltri and Ms. Baker agreed, and suggested that the subgroup be comprised of a few members of the work group who represent stakeholders. Ms. DeJesús said that she would talk to members about forming this subgroup.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.